

REMARKS

Applicants submit this Amendment in response to a non-final Office Action mailed on July 13, 2004. The undersigned thanks the Examiner for the courtesy of a telephonic interview on August 24, 2004.

Claims 1-49 are pending in the Application. Applicants thank the Examiner for indicating the presence of allowable subject matter, as the Office Action states that claims 4, 8-10, 15, 19-21, and 24-26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1-3, 5, 14, 16, and 23 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 32-49 have been newly added. In making this Amendment, Applicants have added no new matter. Applicants make this Amendment without prejudice or disclaimer. Support for the amendments above can be found in the specification and claims as filed. Reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5, 7, 11-14, 16, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,586,115 to Colfer in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,437,526 to Herbst.

A. Claim for Priority

The originally-filed application (in the first sentence of its specification) claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 60/244,301, filed October 31, 2000. This Office Action, as well as the previous Office Actions, does not

acknowledge the claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e). Applicants respectfully repeat the request that the Office acknowledge the claim for priority to the above-mentioned provisional application.

B. Claims 1-3, 5, 7, 11-14, 16, and 22

The Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 5, 7, 11-14, 16, and 22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,586,115 to Colfer in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,437,526 to Herbst.

Claims 1-3, 5, 14, and 16 have been canceled. Claims 7, 11-13, and 22 have been amended to depend from rewritten claims indicated by the Office Action as including allowable subject matter. The Office Action states that claims 4, 8, and 15 are objected to, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. The objected to claims have been rewritten in independent form, as suggested by the Office Action. Claim 7 now depends from rewritten claim 4, claims 11-13 now depend from rewritten claim 8, and claim 22 now depends from rewritten claim 15.

As claims 7, 11-13, and 22 depend from allowable claims, they are allowable for at least the same reasons as the rewritten claims. Accordingly, the rejections to claims 1-3, 5, 14, and 16 should be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

C. Claims 4, 8-10, 15, 19-21, and 24-26

Each of claims 4, 8-10, 15, 19-21, and 24-26 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The Office Action states that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 4, 8-10, 15, 19-21, and

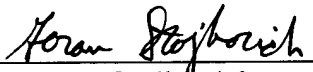
24-26 have been rewritten in independent form, as suggested by the Office Action.
Accordingly, the rejections to claims 6-11, 21-26, 30, and 31 should be withdrawn
and the claims allowed.

CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims are allowable.
Applicants respectfully solicit the issuance of a timely Notice of Allowance for all
pending claims. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to
discuss any matter related to the Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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